

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Representative Holt, chair of the Select Intelligence Oversight Panel, today called upon President-elect Obama to issue an executive order banning the use of torture by all government agencies once he is sworn in as the nation's 44th president.

"Torture tarnishes our nation's values and damages our credibility," Holt said. "I have worked for years to end our government's use of torture. While an Executive Order will not remove the need for legislation on the issue, it is a way for President-elect Obama to put an immediate halt to our government's use of torture during interrogations and to prevent secret detentions. By exercising his authority and acting quickly, he will begin to restore our moral leadership on the issue and repair some of the harm that has been done to our international reputation."

Holt suggested that such an executive order incorporate key principles developed by the National Religious Campaign Against Torture and should:

- *Bar the use of interrogation techniques which we would not find acceptable if used against Americans.
- *Create one national standard for the interrogation and treatment of prisoners for all personnel affiliated with all U.S. forces and agencies.
- *Require that we acknowledge all detainees to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and allow the ICRC access to them.
- *Require that we allow all detainees to have the opportunity to defend themselves in court.
- *Bar transport of people to other countries where there is an expectation of torture.
- *Provide for transparency in our confinement and interrogation procedures, including the videotaping of all interactions between prisoners and American personnel.
- *Make clear that any U.S. official who authorizes, implements, or fails to prevent the use of torture will be held accountable.

A Declaration of Principles that enumerates and expands upon these principles has been prepared by the National Religious Campaign Against Torture, the Center for Victims of Torture, and Evangelicals for Human Rights. Nearly 200 prominent faith leaders from Catholic, Protestant, Evangelical, Jewish, Muslim, and Sikh communities, as well top officials from every Administration since the 1970s, have joined together to endorse the Declaration of Principles. It can be found at www.tortureisamoralissue.org.